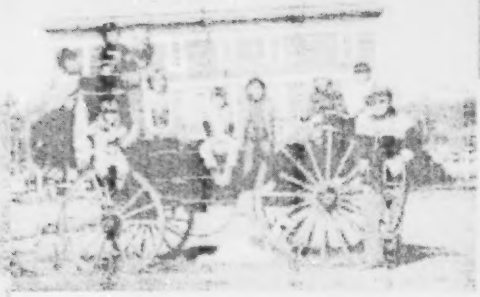
Tourism in the Yukon

The Promise and the Challenges



Tourism Strategy Discussion Paper

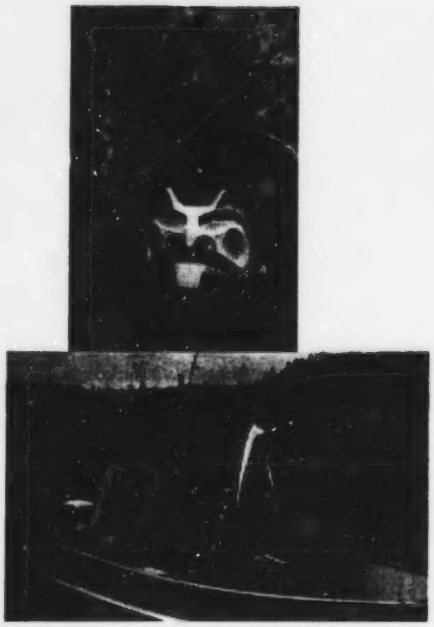
March 1999

101-00336/

I am pleased to present this discussion paper on the future of tourism in the Yukon.

Tourism is a vital part of our economy, which generates jobs and business opportunities throughout the territory. In fact, it is the Yukon's largest single source of private-sector employment.

As one of the world's major areas of unspoiled wilderness, the Yukon presents a wealth of possibilities for adventure travel. In addition, the unique historic and cultural experiences the Yukon has to offer are attracting increasing numbers of visitors from all parts of the globe.



The Yukon government is firmly committed to helping the tourism industry grow in a steady and sustainable way that will benefit all Yukon people. Our Economy 2000 initiatives clearly recognize the pivotal role of tourism in the new Yukon economy.

In the decade since the Yukon's first tourism strategy was introduced, a number of significant changes have taken place, principally in the settlement and implementation of First Nations land claims and self-government agreements.

With these changes, and with the rapidly-changing nature of international tourism, it is important to take a fresh look at how we can best take advantage of the opportunities that tourism presents for Yukon people.

In short, it is time to develop a modern Yukon Tourism Strategy for the new millennium.

The best guarantee of future prosperity lies in thoughtful planning now, based on open dialogue and a shared vision.

Over the coming months, people in every community in the Yukon are being invited to participate in that dialogue and to share their vision of how we can realize the full potential of this important sector of our economy.

Our government believes in the strength of Yukon communities, and in involving people directly in the decisions that affect them.

In that spirit of partnership, I encourage you to take part in this important process.

This discussion paper outlines major issues affecting tourism. It also presents options for consideration in planning how Yukon people and Yukon communities can take advantage of the economic and other benefits that tourism has to offer.

If you cannot attend the community consultations in person, I encourage you to forward your comments directly to the Department of Tourism.

Thank you in advance for your participation and advice.

Dave Keenan

Minister of Tourism

DEVELOPING A NEW TOURISM STRATEGY FOR THE YUKON

Why We Need A Tourism Strategy

...Tourism is vital to the Yukon's economy

Tourism generates over $124 million in annual revenues in the Yukon, affects 56% of businesses in the territory, and generates more than one-third of gross revenues for 20% of Yukon businesses. Tourism also provides more than 11% of all the jobs in the territory, making the industry the Yukon's largest source of private sector employment.[1]

During the calendar year 1998, the Yukon experienced the highest number of visitors ever recorded since accurate data collection began in 1987. Canada Customs border crossing statistics show that 299,000 people entered the territory during that 12-month period, an increase of 12% over the same period one year earlier.[2]

The Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) estimates that tourism revenue worldwide will double by 2005. International tourism to Canada is forecast to grow and CTC research indicates that Canada's North holds much promise. Several major trends identified in a publication by the Canadian Tourism Research Institute and the CTC suggest that tourism offers excellent potential for continued growth in the Yukon because:

- adventure tourism will grow in importance;
- tourists will seek "learning" travel experiences;
- First Nations and cultural tourism will grow;
- winter travel will grow; and
- shoulder season travel should grow.

"Our spectacular scenery, pristine natural environment, and rich cultural heritage make the Yukon exceptionally well positioned to benefit from any increase in adventure travel and ecotourism."

...Many challenges face Yukon tourism

Despite its excellent prospects, the tourism sector faces a number of significant challenges. These include, but are not limited to:

- improving service performance in response to an increasingly competitive tourism marketplace;
- ensuring that tourism development occurs in a manner that is socially, as well as environmentally and economically sustainable;
- increasing air access to the territory;
- improving existing and developing new tourism products to meet changing expectations in world markets;
- expanding investment in Yukon tourism opportunities;

[1] Source: Yukon Bureau of Statistics, 1996 Business Survey
[2] Source: Yukon Bureau of Statistics, 1998 Border Crossing Data

- ensuring effective coordination and information exchange in a sector comprised of many small businesses located throughout the territory; and
- enhancing awareness of the value of tourism and the importance of a positive tourism attitude.

"Tourism generates over $124 million in annual revenues in the Yukon, affects 56% of businesses in the territory, and generates more than one-third of gross revenues for 20% of Yukon businesses."

These challenges, coupled with the fact that the territory's first Tourism Strategy was developed more than a decade ago, make it a good time for us to develop a new Strategy to ensure continued growth of the tourism industry in the years ahead. The new Strategy will provide the framework for the Yukon's tourism partners — governments, communities and the private sector, to subsequently formulate specific plans and actions that will build on our current tourism strengths and meet the challenges that lie ahead. The Strategy will only be successful if these partners collaborate in developing it.

How The Yukon Tourism Strategy Will Be Developed

...Past planning efforts provide a starting point

The Yukon's first Tourism Strategy and Action Plan was approved by government in January 1987. The primary goal of the Plan — emphasizing growth markets and servicing continuing markets reflects its "market-driven" nature. The Strategy has served as the basis on which to make decisions regarding priorities, programs and activities over the past decade.

Many of the objectives and priorities identified in the Action Plan remain relevant today. However, subsequent planning exercises such as the 1993 Tourism Summit have focused on more strategic issues such as the need for a common vision for tourism; a broadened tourism partnership; and for clarification of the roles of the various partners.

...Future planning must also be guided by the values and interests of Yukon people

Basing tourism development on the needs and desires of those wishing to visit the Yukon is a sound principle. However, because tourism affects everyone in a community, the process of developing a new Tourism Strategy must also capture the values and interests of Yukon people and their communities. This balanced approach is consistent with:

- a growing trend by communities world-wide that are affected by tourism to be involved in setting priorities for tourism development;
- the desires of Yukon people to be involved in regional tourism planning initiatives;
- recognizing the economic value of tourism in the Yukon;
- recognizing that tourism must be based on a productive partnership among all communities, all orders of government, and the industry; and
- recognizing that sustainable tourism depends on a continuing, welcoming spirit within our communities.

A Tool for Consultation

This Discussion Paper is not a draft Tourism Strategy. It simply provides the framework and information to:

- develop a "vision" that reflects how Yukon people want the territory to develop as a tourism destination;
- establish the principles that should guide future tourism development in the Yukon;
- discuss key tourism issues; and
- identify strategic priorities for responding to the challenges facing tourism in the Yukon in order to ensure continued growth of this sector over the next several years.

Discussion during the consultation need not be confined to the issues raised in this paper. Identifying other key issues and concerns will help the process and is welcome.

The Opportunity to Have Your Say

Beginning in the spring of 1999, we will be seeking the active participation of Yukon people in developing the Tourism Strategy through a series of meetings in communities throughout the territory. We will be holding public meetings as well as meeting with First Nation governments, local governments, private sector tourism operators, chambers of commerce, tourism associations and other interested parties. We anticipate that subsequent workshops with key stakeholders will be necessary to address specific issues, develop consensus on priorities, and provide clear direction on the objectives for each priority. A Draft Yukon Tourism Strategy is expected to be available for public review by the fall. At that time, a second round of community meetings will be held to obtain feedback on the Draft Strategy. The Strategy should be completed by November.

Community consultation meetings will be advertised locally, as well as through newspapers and radio. In the event that you are unable to attend, you are invited to provide written comments to:

Deputy Minister,
Department of Tourism,
Yukon Government, Box 2703, Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2C6

PROFILING YUKON TOURISM

Defining Tourism

Tourism can be described as the business of attracting and servicing the needs and expectations of visitors. Tourists can be people on vacation, business travellers, people visiting friends and relatives, and even sports teams here for a tournament. Tourism affects and benefits a wide range of industries and businesses — some of which cater exclusively to tourists, while others benefit indirectly from tourism.

How Tourism Affects The Yukon

Considering all dimensions of tourism — economic, environmental, and social is critical when planning for the future of tourism in the Yukon.

...Economic dimension

The 1994 Yukon Visitor Exit Survey, which was conducted between June and September 1994, provides the most recent source of accurate and comprehensive information on the Yukon's tourism industry. The Survey found that about 207,000 people visited the Yukon during that period. Approximately 74% of the visitors were from the United States, 16% were Canadians, and 9% were from other countries. Eighty-six percent (86%) of the visitors were here for a pleasure trip, while 14% were business travellers[3].

"Keeping the Yukon 'in the drivers seat' is essential in positioning the territory to maximize the benefits of tourism growth while minimizing the negative impacts"

The Exit Survey also found that these tourists spent approximately $46.7 million in the Yukon during that period. Of this amount, expenditures on transportation totalled $13.7 million; accommodations totalled $13.6 million; restaurant expenditures totalled $8.4 million; spending on groceries totalled $4.4 million; and shopping and crafts totalled $3.9 million.

An Air Travellers Survey that was conducted during the summer of 1998 found significant growth in air travel to the Yukon since the 1994 Exit Survey. In 1998, the total estimated volume of visitors exiting by air was 24,046, or a 40% increase over 1994. When compared to similar data from the 1994 Visitor Exit Survey (with 1994 dollars adjusted to 1998 dollars), air traveller visitor spending in the Yukon increased 72% from $11.5 million in 1994 to $19.7 million in 1998[4].

Information from a 1996 Business Survey in which more than 2100 businesses participated provides additional indicators on the economic dimensions of tourism in the Yukon. The employment and revenue estimates were based on the perceptions that business owners had of the percentage of their revenue that was generated by non-Yukon, non-commercial, non-government expenditures. Spending by Yukon resident tourists was not included.

[3] Source: Yukon Government Department of Tourism, 1994 Visitor Exit Survey. Note that Visitor Exit Survey statistics do not reflect tourism activity by Yukon people within the territory.
[4] Source: Yukon Government Department of Tourism 1998 Air Travellers Survey

The 1996 Business Survey found that approximately 70% of all employed Yukon people worked for businesses that reported at least some tourism revenue. The survey estimated that 2,000 jobs were directly dependent on tourism.[5] While these numbers alone point to the significant role of tourism in employment here, tourism jobs have special characteristics worth noting.

Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) research shows that Canada's tourism industry has several significant advantages over other sectors as an employment generator, including:

- offering variety in job type, skill, experience level and salaries;
- improving the overall access and mobility of the labour force;
- yielding lower turnover and involuntary lay-off rates than other jobs;
- providing an important source of employment for young people seeking their first job, as well as for those who only want temporary work, such as college and university students; and
- providing easier labour force entry and greater access to the disadvantaged (including visible minorities and people with disabilities).

...Environmental dimension

According to the CTC, adventure travel[6] and ecotourism[7] together form one of the fastest growing tourism sectors in North America. This reflects demographic and lifestyle shifts, including a greater desire for hands-on learning experiences and for trips away from urban routines. The increase in the number of adventure tourism operators in the territory from 80 to 200 over the past five years is a reflection of the popularity of adventure travel in the Yukon[8].

Our spectacular scenery, pristine natural environment, and rich cultural heritage make the Yukon exceptionally well positioned to benefit from any increase in adventure travel and ecotourism. However, in the long-term, sustainable tourism development in the Yukon will depend on good practices in all sectors of the tourism industry. These include the wise use and conservation of our natural resources; the protection and enhancement of our environment; and the preservation of our cultural, historic and aesthetic resources. To this end, a number of important initiatives have been undertaken by the Yukon government in consultation with tourism operators, environmental and arts and cultural groups, and citizens of the territory. These include:

- developing the Wilderness Tourism Licensing Act as a means of ensuring that the Yukon retains its reputation as a safe and environmentally attractive wilderness tourism destination;

[5] Source: Yukon Bureau of Statistics, 1996 Business Survey

[6] Adventure travel is an outdoor leisure activity that generally takes place in an unusual, exotic, remote or wilderness setting, involves some form of unconventional means of transportation and tends to be associated with high or low levels of physical activity. (Source: Tourism Canada)

[7] Ecotourism is purposeful travel that creates an understanding of cultural and natural history, while safeguarding the integrity of the ecosystem and producing economic benefits that encourage preservation. Ecotourism implies a scientific, aesthetic, or philosophical approach with a high level of interpretation. (Source: Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Tourism)

[8] Source: Yukon Government Department of Tourism.

- developing the Protected Areas Strategy as a means of caring for the ecosystems on Yukon lands and rivers; and
- establishing Special Management Areas (such as the Bonnet Plume River) and territorial historic sites (such as Fort Selkirk) as part of Land Claims Final Agreements.

In addition, government to government consultations occurred with First Nations in regards to the above.

These initiatives embrace the principle of sustainability and will play an important role in preserving our natural, cultural, and historic resources for the enjoyment of Yukon people and those who wish to visit our territory in the years ahead.

...Social dimension

The social and cultural characteristics of a tourism destination also influence its image. At the same time, the presence of visitors can affect the social and cultural values of a destination. Other jurisdictions have identified key aspects of the social dimension of tourism that can also apply to the Yukon, including:

- First Nations tourism can offer the benefits of economic independence, cultural preservation, and employment for communities as well as opportunities for First Nations people to share their culture.
- Tourism can help promote local cultural events, the development of new attractions, presentation of heritage sites and increased community pride.
- Tourism experiences include important social and cultural elements, such as the character of communities and the lifestyles of the residents that need to be considered and preserved as characteristics of a destination.
- While tourism often acts as a catalyst for private investment and provision of public infrastructure, it can also place increased strain on local infrastructure and services.

While most of the above are positive aspects of tourism, increased tourist volume may also adversely affect the quality of life for local residents. That's why the Tourism Strategy needs to reflect the values and lifestyles of Yukon people. Keeping the Yukon "in the driver's seat" is essential in positioning the territory to maximize the benefits of tourism growth while minimizing the negative impacts.

DEVELOPING A VISION FOR TOURISM IN THE YUKON

The first International Tourism Policy Forum held in 1991 in Washington, DC found a growing trend for communities affected by tourism to be actively involved in decisions about tourism development. The Forum concluded that, while in a competitive world we still need to be concerned about consumer needs when planning for tourism development, "...there is a strong and growing recognition that a greater balance needs to be struck in weighing the desires of visitors against the well-being of their hosts. There is a need to recognize that tourism must benefit the local community and that there must be broad-based participation in tourism development decisions at the community level".

"Tourism must be based on a productive partnership among all communities, all orders of government and the industry."

A Vision For Yukon Tourism

"Strategic planning is more than the creation of a long-term economic 'road map'. It is an inclusive, participatory process that begins with the development and statement of a vision ... based upon the values and identity of its people"[9].

We are beginning the process of developing a new Tourism Strategy for the Yukon by asking Yukon people to define a vision for tourism in the territory. This vision will broadly define how Yukon people would like to see tourism develop over the next few years. It will also provide guidance to industry and government about the kinds of facilities, events, services and attractions that are most consistent with the goals, values, cultures and lifestyles of Yukon people.

The vision statement developed for the Yukon Department of Tourism in 1995, as well as vision statements from other jurisdictions are presented at the end of this paper.

Guiding Principles For Future Tourism Development

Guiding principles set out the values and beliefs communities want respected and incorporated into tourism plans. In effect, they provide written assurance that tourism will grow and develop in a manner consistent with community values and priorities. Examples of guiding principles that have been identified through regional tourism planning processes in the Yukon include:

- ensuring the economic and social benefits of tourism accrue to local residents;
- making sure the pace, scale and type of tourism development is sustainable and consistent with regional capabilities; and
- building local ownership and control.

[9] Source: Pursuing Excellence in Tourism-Making Choices Tourism Development Handbook, Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, and Tourism Industry Association of Newfoundland and Labrador

Identifying the principles that will guide future tourism development can also be helpful in defining the tourism vision. In some cases, guiding principles are actually incorporated directly into the vision statement. These could include:

- fostering quality of life for residents and guests;
- providing equitable employment and economic benefits;
- preserving natural, cultural, and historical resources; and
- environmental and cultural sensitivity.
- providing authentic and unique experiences;

Principles such as these support the development of a healthy tourism industry.

Important Factors In Realizing Our Vision

In addition to guiding principles, a number of critical success factors or conditions must be met if the vision for tourism development is to be attained. Examples of such factors might include:

- globally competitive practices, through offering quality services and value for money;
- sustainable environmental, cultural and heritage management practices that protect the Yukon's tourism product;
- involvement of local communities and groups;
- a safe and stable environment for tourists;
- effective product enhancement and diversity;
- effective tourism training, education, and awareness;
- creative and aggressive marketing and promotion;
- strong economic linkages with other sectors of the economy; or
- increased involvement of First Nations in tourism.

Vision and principles — What are your views?

The new Tourism Strategy must reflect the culture, lifestyles, goals and objectives of the Yukon's residents, governments, and the tourism industry. In view of this, what values and principles should be considered in developing a new vision for tourism in the Yukon?

KEY ISSUES FOR FUTURE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Over the past few years, (at least some of) the key issues facing tourism in the Yukon have emerged. These issues were identified through a variety of workshops and meetings held with tourism operators and associations, community leaders, and the general public in the Yukon; feedback from regional tourism planning processes in the territory; and through tourism research conducted on a global, national and territorial basis.

"...in order to meet changing tourist demands and remain competitive, we need to upgrade existing, and develop new tourism products."

For discussion purposes, these issues have been grouped into four categories:

- product development
- marketing
- organization and 'partnerships'[10]
- community support for tourism.

During the consultation process, we will be seeking input from Yukon people on the broad direction that should be taken and the priorities to be met to ensure that tourism grows the way we want it to. Comments and suggestions need not be confined only to these issues. Identification of other key concerns will help the strategy development process and is welcome.

Product Development Issues

Tourism product can be defined as anything being delivered to satisfy the needs and wants of tourists. This could include an adventure or learning experience, a gift, food, shelter, or transportation, as well as all other goods and services or facilities used by visitors.

Any strategy for the development of a 'product' should be based on a number of key criteria. These are the criteria by which visitors will be enticed to come here in the first place, to return as visitors, or to encourage others to come to the Yukon.

...Generic issues

The 1987 Tourism Action Plan provided a solid framework for considering product development issues by identifying the generally accepted criteria of quality, quantity, variety, uniqueness, and value for money.

[10] The term 'partnership' is used here to refer to the relationship between governments, communities/
Yukon people, and the tourism industry. It is not the Northern Tourism Partnership, a recently
established marketing partnership involving the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

"Through a tourism strategy, we can all play a role in dealing with the issues of producing and providing quality products."

Quality

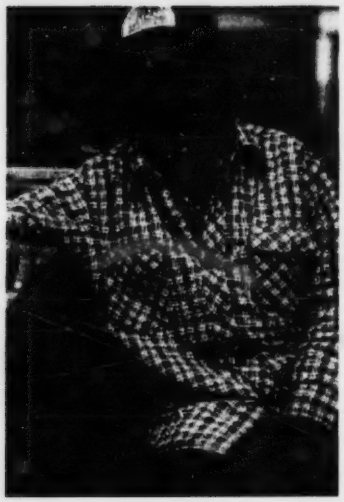
The Yukon offers a fairly wide range of tourism products including such things as natural or man-made attractions, sightseeing tours, adventure trips, RV parks and campgrounds, and events. But recent studies and market research point out that, in order to meet changing tourist demands and remain competitive, we need to upgrade existing, and develop new tourism products.

Through a tourism strategy, we can all play a role in dealing with the issues of producing and providing quality products. Overall quality, customer service, product diversity and competitiveness must be addressed. Financing also needs to be available in order to permit the investment necessary to diversify and/or improve our tourism product.

Quantity

To satisfy the varying needs and expectations of tourists, the right amount of tourism product must be available. An appropriate mix of attractions, facilities, events and services encourages visitors to stay longer. Viable tourism products should be encouraged throughout the Yukon so that all communities and Yukon people can benefit. Opportunities have been identified to develop additional tourism product and to build tourism into a four-season industry in the Yukon. These include:

- First Nations tourism;
- winter tourism;
- adventure tourism;
- resort facilities;
- meetings and conventions;
- incentive travel;
- more year-round local day trips/tours;
- increased "packaging" of products.



Variety

Tourists also want to have a variety of products or experiences available. Communities and regions throughout the Yukon need to consider offering a wider range of visitor services, attractions and experiences that target the kinds of product visitors want (i.e. market driven). These could be anything from roadside fishing trips, half-day wilderness experiences, cultural experiences, unique attractions and events, to resorts in scenic areas and so on.

In response to market demand, the Yukon government is currently working on an approach that may lead to the development of higher end tourism products and facilities (i.e. medium sized resorts) in the territory. The new Yukon Millennium Program will also provide a source of funding for special events and celebrations throughout the territory that will enhance the experiences of visitors from within, as well as outside the Yukon.

Uniqueness

Product positioning will determine how well the industry can capture visitors' imaginations and meet their expectations. One way to position the Yukon as a tourism destination is by showing how unique the territory and our tourism products are compared to other places. Examples include First Nations culture, heritage, history and art. Our gold rush history and our relatively untouched wilderness, spectacular scenery and abundant wildlife also contribute to the Yukon's uniqueness.

Significant opportunity exists to develop authentic First Nations tourism product in the territory. But first, many issues and questions need to be addressed including how much, and what aspects of culture are shared, how the product is defined, and what the human resource and long term investment implications are.

Value for money

The Yukon's visitors should go home satisfied that their money has been well spent. Quality of service is key. Value for money depends on the professionalism with which visitors are treated, the courtesy extended, and the quality, quantity, and variety of all the goods and services and tourism experiences that they participate in.

The condition of the "environment" also counts and this includes the urban environment. Streets, highways, parks and other infrastructure used by visitors must contribute positively to the total vacation experience.

The 1994 Visitor Exit Survey found that 92% of visitors surveyed reported good value for money. This bodes well for the Yukon as a destination. However, given the extremely competitive tourism environment in which we live, continued attention to this aspect of our tourism product is essential.

"The Yukon has been very successful in increasing awareness of our tourism product.

Notwithstanding these successes, there is still room for improvement. "

...Yukon specific issues and concerns

In addition to the above, a workshop held in the fall of 1998 as a forerunner to the Northern Tourism Partnership meeting identified two other product development issues — training and access.

Training

Human resource development is a critical component of tourism product delivery. A professional, well-trained workforce, capable of and committed to high standards of service is critical to the Yukon's long term ability to compete successfully. Recent workshops have found that continued effort is required to address the training needs of the tourism sector here. The newly revised Yukon Training Strategy provides overall direction in this regard.

Tourism management, hospitality and service training programs are a shared responsibility of Yukon College, the Yukon Tourism Education Council, the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon, and Tourism Yukon.

Product development — What are your views?

What new or enhanced services, activities and attractions should be considered in a new Tourism Strategy to ensure that the Yukon's tourism product continues to develop and remain competitive in a world market?

What roles should the various tourism partners (governments, communities, private sector) play in product development?

The Yukon Tourism Strategy must address broad, ongoing issues related to the need for improved business experience; employee qualifications; the importance of training; and continued awareness of tourism in the education system. In addition, public and industry awareness that tourism provides "real" jobs needs to increase.

Access

Efforts must continue to improve air access to the Yukon. Road access and highway transportation systems are also an issue for product development in many parts of the Yukon. Land claims, national parks, and protected areas are other factors that must be considered in the development of new tourism product. Within this context, environmental sustainability needs to be respected.

Marketing Issues

Marketing creates an image in the minds of potential visitors with the intent of convincing them to visit the territory. As such, marketing is a critical element in the success of our Tourism Strategy.

Tourism marketing in the Yukon is a shared responsibility of the Department of Tourism, private sector operators and businesses, tourism industry associations, chambers of commerce, First Nation governments, local governments, and regional tourism associations. The Tourism Marketing Council, an advisory body to the Minister of Tourism, provides advice on long-term, strategic marketing directions and approaches. The Department of Tourism's role is to market the Yukon itself as a tourism destination, while the private sector is responsible for marketing and selling actual tourism product.

"A significant challenge exists to ensure that effective coordination and linkages exist among the various players in the Yukon's tourism industry..."

The action plan developed ten years ago for the first Yukon Tourism Strategy identified the following key thrusts or principles for marketing that were considered fundamental to the success of the Strategy:

- Encourage markets that provide the highest dollar returns to the Yukon, based on a combination of visitor's high per diem expenditures and the markets' existing or potential size over the next five to ten years.
- Emphasize these key markets in development and marketing while maintaining the other existing markets currently being served.
- Focus on future growth by increasing volumes and expenditures of current markets and by increasing size of the markets that provide the highest dollar returns – based on high per diem expenditures and potential size in the future.

The steady and significant increase in the number of tourists visiting the Yukon over the past ten years strongly suggests that adhering to these principles and using industry research as the basis for marketing decisions has served the territory well.

The Yukon's use of technology and partnership approaches has also been highly effective in destination marketing. The Yukon was one of the first jurisdictions to embrace new technology. We were also one of the most aggressive and innovative jurisdictions in embracing the global trend to leverage marketing dollars through strategic partnerships. Examples of these strategic partnerships include:

- Tourism North, a joint Yukon, Alaska, British Columbia program targeted to drive-through traffic;
- The Wilderness Tourism Association of the Yukon (WTAY) program, a partnership between participating WTAY members and the Department of Tourism that included development of Web sites and an adventure guide; and
- A variety of partnerships between the Department of Tourism and the Canadian Tourism Commission.

As a result, the Yukon has been very successful in increasing awareness of our tourism product.

Notwithstanding these successes, there is still room for improvement. A number of marketing related issues have been identified that are appropriately considered in the development of the new Tourism Strategy including the need for:

- funding to assist with promotion;
- additional business experience as it relates to package development, general marketing, and travel trade sales;
- continued improvement in communications between the Department of Tourism, the tourism industry and the public at large regarding the Department's marketing activities — what the target markets are, why these markets were identified, and the results of marketing campaigns;
- a winter marketing program;
- continued market research, and for more current market research information to assist the tourism sector with product development and marketing initiatives; and
- assistance to tourism operators in interpreting market research information.

The new Tourism Marketing Fund, recently set up by the Yukon Government provides funding to Yukon businesses, not-for-profit organizations and associations, and First Nation and municipal governments to assist in addressing some of these issues.

Tourism marketing — What are your views?

Should the principles outlined above, or other principles guide marketing efforts in the future?

"...the importance of active participation by the public and the tourism sector (in developing the Yukon Tourism Strategy) cannot be overemphasized."

Organization and Partnership Issues

...Tourism organization

The "tourism organization" in the Yukon includes a broad spectrum of partners that are involved both directly and indirectly in tourism and/or that have an interest in tourism activity. Some of these are sector-specific, while others are cross-sectoral in nature. These include:

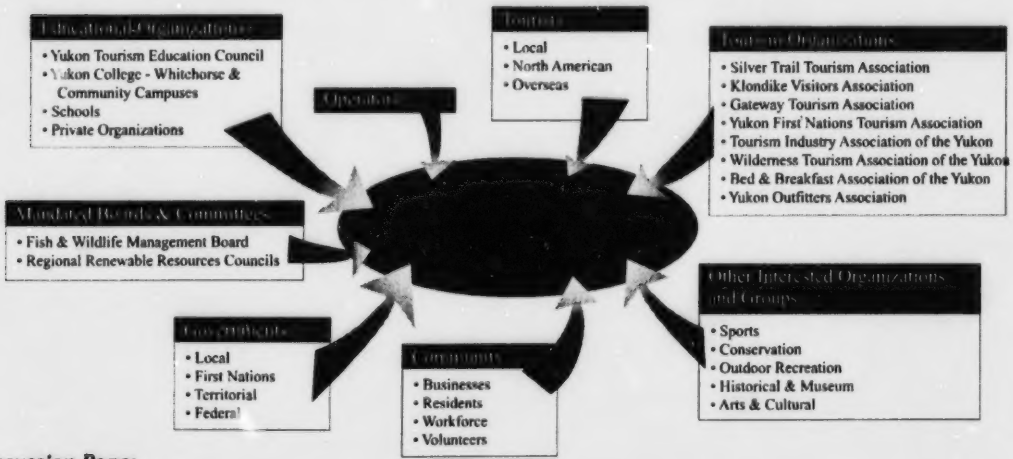
- *territory-wide industry associations;*
- *regional tourism associations;*
- *governments — local, First Nations, and territorial;*
- *chambers of commerce;*
- *recreation, heritage, outdoor and environmental groups; and*
- *suppliers of tourism services such as retail businesses, hotels, restaurants, and shops.*

...Tourism partnerships

In addition to the "internal" partnerships noted above, several partnerships have been established with businesses and organizations outside the territory. For the most part, these are strategic marketing alliances including:

- *Tourism Yukon's partnerships with a number of airlines to increase air access to the territory;*
- *a joint Yukon/Alaska program which distributes the Yukon Vacation Guide in conjunction with the Alaska Vacation Guide; and*
- *the new Canada's North Tourism Partnership between the Yukon, Nunavut, and Northwest Territories.*

Yukon Tourism:
A Cooperative Effort



...Issues and challenges

A significant challenge exists to ensure that effective coordination and linkages exist among the various players in the Yukon's tourism industry because of the:

- proliferation of small businesses that comprise our tourism industry;
- large number of suppliers of goods and services to the tourism sector; and the
- number of groups and organizations with a direct or indirect involvement and/or interest in tourism.

Addressing these challenges, as well as the organizational and partnership issues listed below will be necessary if the Yukon is to realize the full potential for tourism growth in the years ahead:

- the partnership amongst tourism players in the Yukon needs to be strengthened by increasing the commitment to it by all partners;
- roles within the partnership need to be more clearly defined (recognizing that roles will evolve over time in response to changes in the tourism operating environment);
- continued improvement in communication amongst tourism partners is needed; and
- the arts, cultural, and heritage sectors need to be more actively involved in the tourism partnership.

Tourism organization and partnerships — What are your views?

Can partnerships and organizational relationships among governments, the tourism industry, and communities be more effective in ensuring that the full benefits of tourism are realized in the Yukon in the years ahead?

Community Support For Tourism

The level of community support for tourism in the Yukon varies. Communities and regions throughout the Yukon must consider both the positive and negative aspects of tourism and decide how important it is to them. To a large extent, the level of support for tourism as a legitimate economic industry will determine how far it develops.

The Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) recognizes that the long-term sustainability of tourism in Canada depends in part on a continuing, welcoming spirit among tourism employees and within host communities. Community support will only exist if communities are aware of how the tourism industry operates, how it is of benefit to them, and how they can be actively involved in planning its future.

The benefits of tourism and the industry's importance to the Yukon's economy have been noted throughout this Discussion Paper. Public participation in developing the new Yukon Tourism Strategy, as well as participation in community and regional tourism planning processes, will help strengthen community 'ownership' in tourism planning and development here.

Community support for tourism — What are your views?

How can communities increase their role in support of tourism in the Yukon?

Community support also depends on the assurance that tourism development will occur in a manner that maintains and respects the quality of life enjoyed by residents of communities affected by tourism. TIAC has developed industry guidelines that speak directly to issues affecting community support for tourism. These guidelines include:

- "Respect the values and aspirations of our host communities and strive to provide services and facilities in a manner which contributes to community identity, pride, aesthetics and the quality of life of residents.
- Bring economic objectives into harmony with conservation of resources and environmental, social, cultural, and aesthetic values in the formulation of vision statements, mission statements, policies, plans and the decision-making process.
- Encourage tourism research and education which gives emphasis to ethics, heritage preservation and the host community; and the necessary knowledge base to ensure the economic, social, cultural and environmental sustainability of tourism.
- Act with a spirit of cooperation within the industry and related sectors to protect and enhance the environment, conserve resources, achieve balanced development and improve the quality of life in host communities."

In addition, the process used to develop a vision for tourism in the Yukon may well yield other guidelines or principles that can be incorporated into the new Tourism Strategy.

EXAMPLES OF VISION STATEMENTS

Yukon Department of Tourism (1995):

"Our pride in the Yukon, the beauty of its land, the character of its people and the uniqueness of its history and culture, will create a world well informed and motivated to visit the Territory".

Canada:

"Canada will be the premiere four season destination to connect with nature and to experience diverse cultures and communities".

Calgary:

"Calgary...host, consultant and educator to the world".

Saskatchewan:

"Tourism will be a vital, growing and sustainable economic sector competing, with integrity, as a world-recognized destination".

Montana:

"Tourism is a leading year-round industry in Montana based upon the preservation and enhancement of the state's natural, cultural and historical resources. Growth and development of tourism is balanced with environmental and cultural sensitivity providing an authentic and unique guest experience. In a spirit of cooperation, the public and private sectors of the tourism industry work together as well as with other key industries in the state. Operating in this manner, tourism fosters an enhanced overall quality of life for residents and guests while providing employment and economic benefits more equitably across the state. As a result, tourism is recognized as a vital industry by residents and policy-makers alike".

NEXT STEPS

This Discussion Paper is the first step in the process of developing a comprehensive Yukon Tourism Strategy. This paper serves as a framework for presenting and discussing key tourism issues identified by members of the "tourism partnership" here. Over the next few months, the vision of tourism for the Yukon will take shape as meetings with communities and industry are held. This vision will serve as the broad framework for developing the new Tourism Strategy.

The Yukon Tourism Strategy will set out the general direction and priorities for tourism in the Yukon as we move into the 21st century. It is essential that the Strategy be developed and owned by all elements of the tourism sector — public and private — and supported by Yukon people. Therefore, the importance of active participation by the public and the tourism sector cannot be overemphasized.

We look forward to your participation in this process and to your assistance in ensuring a bright future for tourism in the Yukon. Please watch for meetings in your community and plan to attend. And remember, in the event that you are unable to attend, you are invited to provide written comments to:

Deputy Minister,
Department of Tourism,
Yukon Government, Box 2703, Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2C6